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INLAND SURFACE TRANSPORTATION IN EAST GERMANY AND
GREATER BERLIN BEFORE AND AFTER 13 AUGUST 1961

OFFICE OF RESEARCH AND REPORTS

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

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INLAND SURFACE TRANSPORTATION IN EAST GERMANY
AND GREATER BERLIN BEFORE AND AFTER 13 AUGUST 1961

On 13 August 1961 the East German Government initiated a series of measures designed to isolate West Berlin from East Germany and East Berlin. The construction of a concrete wall through Berlin and the establishment of a limited number of controlled access points around West Berlin have created the semblance of an international frontier.

The principal effects on transportation of the 13 August action have been the imposition of additional hardships upon the East Germans, particularly upon those residing in East Berlin, and a general disruption of traffic and transportation in East Germany around the Berlin area. The closure of the electrified S-Bahn routes leading into and through West Berlin has forced the railroads to divert traffic to the steam operated Outer Ring of the East German railroad system. This has resulted in a critical shortage of steam locomotives, an extremely congested traffic situation on the Outer Ring, abnormal delays to freight and passenger traffic and a general complication of the entire railroad transport situation in the Berlin area. These factors are contributing to a disruption in transportation throughout all of East Germany, threatening the efficient distribution of fuels and food. Passenger transport within both East and West Berlin has been seriously disrupted and the time required for workers to travel from and to their place of employment has in many cases more than tripled. Both East and West Berlin have been compelled to acquire additional motor buses to compensate for the disruption in the electrified city rail transport facilities. The railroad construction projects which followed the 13 August action have not only wasted man hours and material but have shifted priorities away from projects which probably have far more economic justification. The attempts to isolate West Berlin have resulted in a costly diversion and re-routing of freight and passenger traffic in the Berlin area which will continue unless the East Germans lift the restrictions which they have imposed.

Greater Berlin is the hub of the railroad, highway and inland waterway routes radiating to all points in East Germany and to the borders of neighboring countries. (See map figure 1) A system of canals connects greater Berlin with the Oder and the Elbe Rivers and with the Mittelland Canal which in turn connects with the Rhine River. East German railroad system trains in long distance and international traffic originate and terminate in East Berlin with few exceptions. The exceptions are trains carrying official passenger and freight traffic of the Occupying Powers between West Berlin and the German Federal Republic, and German Federal Republic commercial freight traffic from and to West Berlin, all of which originate and terminate in West Berlin. Many international passenger trains transit West Berlin, some of which make a stop at the Zoological Garden railroad station in West Berlin where international travellers with proper documents may board or leave the trains.

A circular or belt railroad known as the Berlin Outer Ring completely encircles greater Berlin, affording a by-pass of the center of the city. The Outer Ring was completed during the blockade of 1948-49 and some sections were double tracked at that time.

There are seven railroad crossing points on the German Federal

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Republic-East German border all of which are open to international and interzonal traffic. Five of these crossing points are used for interzonal freight traffic between the German Federal Republic and East Germany while the other two are used for international traffic and for transit traffic through East Germany to a third country.

All Allied freight and passenger traffic and all freight traffic between the German Federal Republic and West Berlin is restricted to the railroad crossing point at Helmstedt-Marienborn which enters West Berlin at Griebnitzsee near Potsdam. Passenger traffic between the German Federal Republic and East Germany, including greater Berlin, is normally routed over four of the crossing points.

Highway freight and passenger traffic between greater Berlin and the German Federal Republic travels through five interzonal crossing points and via five highway routes. These five routes converge near the outskirts of West Berlin and enter West Berlin through two control points. All highway freight and passenger traffic of the Occupying Powers is restricted to the autobahn route which enters East Germany at Helmstedt-Marienborn and enters West Berlin at Babelsburg-Dreilinden.

Within greater Berlin, two railroad systems provide routes for passenger transportation throughout both the East and West sectors. These two systems are the S-Bahn and the U-Bahn. The S-Bahn, an electrified elevated railroad owned and operated by the East German Railroad (Reichsbahn), extends throughout the entire city and into the Soviet zone of East Germany where travellers can make connections with long distance trains of the East German railroad system. S-Bahn traffic using steam locomotives also runs over some portions of the Berlin Outer Ring. The U-Bahn, an electrified subway system, operates in both the East and West sectors of the city and crosses the inter-sector border at several points. Each sector owns and controls the operations within its sector. None of the U-Bahn routes extend beyond the city limits of greater Berlin.

City street car and bus line routes are operated independently in each sector and do not cross the sector border. Prior to 13 August 1961, fourteen intersector crossing points were authorized for pedestrians or travellers using the S-Bahn, U-Bahn or motor vehicles. (See map figure 2)

Since 13 August 1961

The measures taken on 13 August 1961 have had no effect on international railroad and highway traffic routes between greater Berlin and the German Federal Republic. Neither have they affected Allied or German Federal Republic traffic from or to West Berlin. International trains continue to run on schedule and some of them transit West Berlin stopping at the Zoological Garden railroad station in West Berlin where passengers may board or leave the trains. Presumably, East German police aboard the passenger trains enforce control measures to prevent the defection of East German residents in the West Berlin railroad station. The only change worthy of note in this connection is that trains originate and terminate in East Berlin at the Friedrichstrasse railroad station instead of the Berlin East railroad station, formerly the main terminal according to all international timetables. It has been reported that the Friedrichstrasse railroad station has been altered to provide immigration and customs control of passengers and merchandise as a full-fledged international port of entry and exit.

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The most notable result of the 13 August measures in long distance railroad traffic is the drastic reduction of the number of East Germans crossing the German Federal Republic borders. During the first seven months of 1961, a total of 537,175 East German travellers entered the Federal Republic from East Germany and 566,151 entered East Germany from the Federal Republic. In September, the first full month after the 13 August measures, only 70 East German travellers entered the Federal Republic and only 7,989 entered East Germany.

[Inland waterway traffic on vessels registered in the German Federal Republic has not been affected except that vessels may enter East Berlin only during specific periods during the day and only under East German police escort. On the other hand, vessels of East German registry have been prohibited from using the inland waterways which transit West Berlin.] Prior to the 13 August restrictions, transit traffic on the inland waterway through West Berlin on East German vessels amounted to 300 to 400 thousand tons per month (376,247 tons on 1,313 vessels in July 1961). This traffic dropped to only 158,000 tons on 528 vessels during August 1961. This restriction means that East German barge traffic from the Elbe River or the Mittelland Canal destined to East Berlin must be routed via the Havel Canal and the Oder-Havel Canal to the Oder River, thence up the Oder to the Oder Spree waterway and thence by the Oder Spree to East Berlin. This circuituous route is over 300 kilometers longer than the route via the Havel River and the Teltow Canal through West Berlin. The added distance and the additional time required will probably make the cost of inland water transport prohibitive, resulting in a diversion of the traffic to the railroads which are already being intensively used in the Berlin area.

The measures taken by the East German regime on 13 August 1961 have drastically hampered transportation within greater Berlin as well as the East German suburbs adjacent to the West Berlin borders. (See map figure 3)

[All S-Bahn lines running between West Berlin and the Soviet zone ceased operations on 13 August and have since been made inoperative by the removal of rails and the blocking of tracks. East German commuters who formerly used these lines going to and from work in East Berlin are now routed over the Outer Ring completely by-passing West Berlin. This has more than doubled the travel distance and has tripled or even quadrupled the travel time of workers.]

[Of the S-Bahn lines formerly connecting East and West Berlin, only two continue to operate across the sector border. The line connecting the northern West Berlin suburbs of Tegel and Frohnau in the French sector with the southern West Berlin suburb of Wansee and Lichterfelde in the American sector continues to run through a part of East Berlin crossing the sector border at two points. All stops in East Berlin have been eliminated except at the Friedrichstrasse station and anyone wishing to board or leave the trains at that point is subject to East German police control and, if of German nationality, a special permit. The central west-to-east line also enters East Berlin and stops at the Friedrichstrasse station from which point it returns to West Berlin. If a traveller wishes to continue his trip into East Berlin, he must transfer to another S-Bahn train departing from a different platform. Travellers are subject to the same East German police controls as mentioned above. One new S-Bahn route, between Berlin Pankow and Schoenhauser Allee has been constructed in East Berlin to facilitate passenger traffic between the central part of the East Berlin and Oranienburg, a suburb north of Berlin in the Soviet zone.]

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[Of the four U-Bahn lines which formerly operated in East and West Berlin, only two continue to pass through East Berlin. The line between Tegel in the French sector and Tempelhof in the American sector continues to pass through East Berlin stopping at Friedrichstrasse. Travellers who board or leave the trains at Friedrichstrasse are subject to the same controls by East German police as are the S-Bahn passengers mentioned above. Another line between Gesundbrunnen and Leine Strasse transits a part of East Berlin without stopping at all. All other lines in both East and West Berlin terminate at the last station before crossing the sector borders.]

[Rail freight traffic from those areas of East Germany which are East of Berlin and which formerly entered West Berlin through East Berlin is no longer permitted to do so. Instead, such traffic must now circle East Berlin and enter West Berlin directly from the Soviet zone of East Germany at either Drewitz or Griebnitzsee, where rail traffic from the German Federal Republic has entered since 1949.]

East German pleasure and sight seeing boats have been prohibited from entering West Berlin since 13 August 1961. Also, all East German barges bringing freight into West Berlin must enter West Berlin only at Henningsdorf, north of Berlin on the Havel River. All transit traffic through West Berlin on East German barges has been prohibited.

The expense to which the East German regime has subjected itself as a direct result of the 13 August measures cannot be assessed completely in monetary terms. Nevertheless it is apparent that some of the construction projects made necessary by the closure of transportation routes and the diversion of traffic have been costly.

The Outer Ring from Hohen Neuendorf north of Berlin and circling West Berlin to Saarmund has been double tracked. This involved the preparation of the road bed, the building of embankments and the placement of 64 kilometers of track requiring about 6,400 tons of rail. Between 2,500 and 3,000 workers were employed on this project which was completed in 60 days. Rail for the project was obtained by diverting supplies previously earmarked for the reconstruction of the militarily important Frankfurt-Am-Oder -- Berlin route, which had earlier been given top priority in the railroad reconstruction program. Traffic over the newly constructed second track is restricted to very slow speeds because insufficient time was permitted to compact the road bed. A number of bridges for the second track have not yet been completed, causing traffic bottlenecks. The rerouting of Berlin S-Bahn traffic over this route has added to the congestion and has caused delays and confusion in handling commercial freight traffic. Moreover, S-Bahn traffic which formerly operated with electric locomotives must now rely upon steam locomotives resulting in a critical shortage of steam locomotives in the Berlin area. In a recent speech in Berlin, Walter Ulbricht cryptically described the railroad freight traffic situation in Berlin as being "extraordinarily complicated," and many reports indicate that rail freight traffic in the Berlin area is jammed.

In order to improve the situation of the Outer Ring the East German railroad plans to spend 106.9 million DM in 1962 on construction and repair. Construction work will include the repair or replacement of existing trackage, construction of new bridges and the repair of old ones, and the electrification of some sections which are used by the S-Bahn. Another project involves the construction of a new S-Bahn line in East Berlin. This new line, running from Berlin Pankow to Schoenhauser Strasse, was completed in 40 days

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and provides a route from the center of the city to the Outer Ring and thence to Oranienburg north of Berlin. The expenditures in terms of material and labor on this project have not been made public. It is probable, however, that they were high because the new route runs through a densely populated area which would require the destruction of buildings and structures in the way.

As a direct result of the 13 August measures, West Berlin trade unions proclaimed a boycott of the S-Bahn. Before the end of August the most conservative estimates indicated that traffic had dropped to less than 100,000 passengers daily from a normal average of 400,000 to 500,000. S-Bahn fares in West Berlin are purchased with DM(West) and are a good source of foreign exchange for the East German regime. S-Bahn earnings of DM(West) in 1960 amounted to an estimated 90 million. The boycott, if it continues, will result in a loss of 75 to 80 percent of that revenue.

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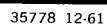
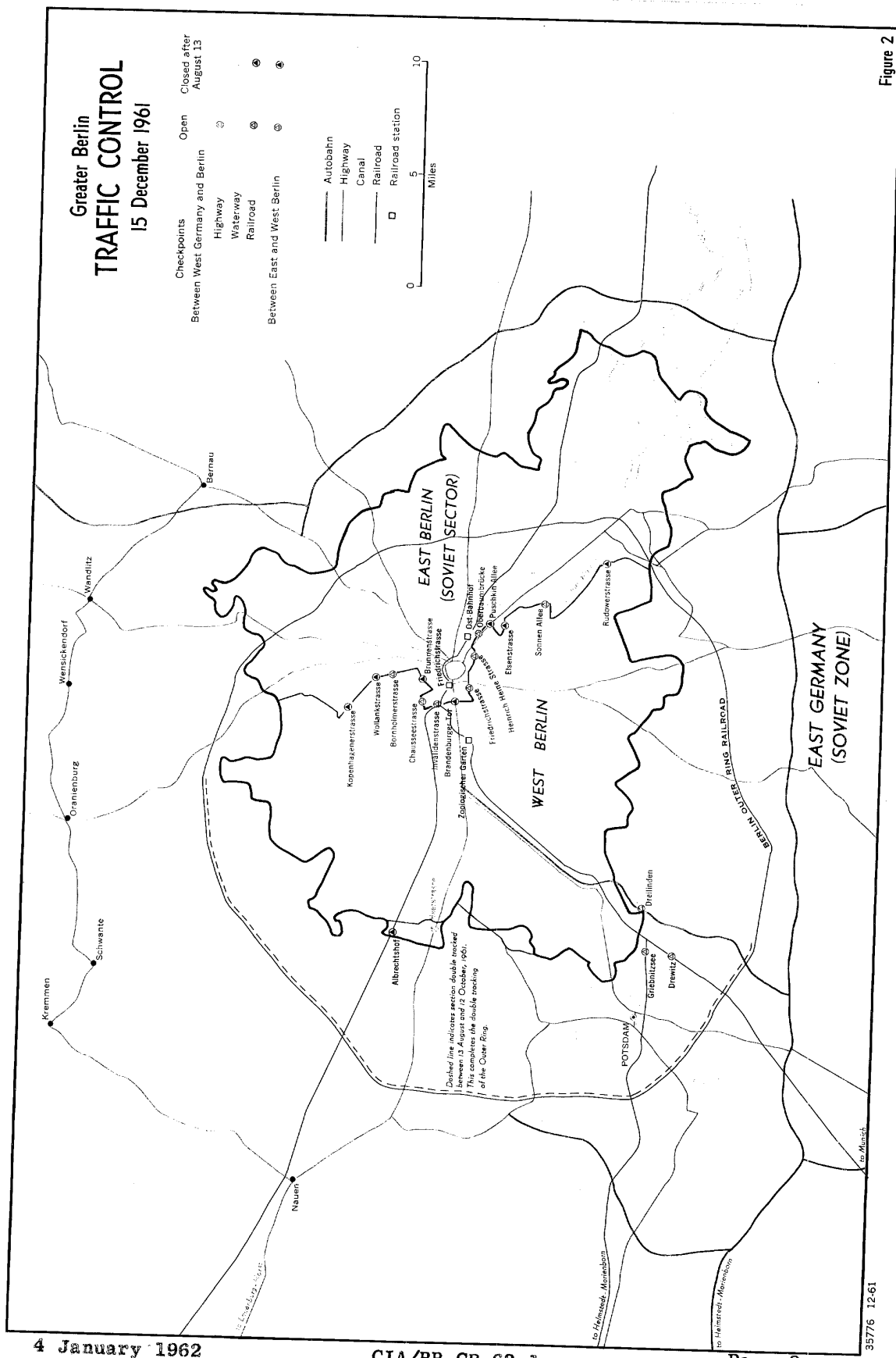


Figure 1

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